

## Steal This Hook!

# The Dark-Cloaked Stranger

By Doug Beyer



A cloak has many jobs -- it hides a stranger's face, conceals her profile, and preserves her anonymity. From the PCs' perspective, it creates a mystery they must solve. Steal these hooks that all involve a *dark-cloaked stranger*, and throw the cloak of mystery around your campaign.

### The Mysterious Muckraker

A red-bearded kalashtar rogue pulls back the hood of his *cloak of elvenkind* and appears from the shadows. He says he traveled here to expose a bloody conspiracy involving House Ghallanda during its Wandering Inn traveling fair -- and to line the pockets of his lovely cloak along the way. Will the PCs believe this free spirit and help him investigate? Is it actually possible that the halflings of the Hostellers Guild conceal a murderous secret, or is the rogue merely baiting the PCs into a wild goose chase? Are the heroes on the verge of uncovering corruption in the name of justice, or are they about to level a damaging, false claim at an innocent house, for some power-seeker's dark ends? It may be imperative to track down the background of the redheaded rogue before proceeding, and a local half-elf may know how to pinpoint where the man procured that magic cloak.



### Figure on the Gnomes' Waterfront

The PCs decide to shadow a suspicious cloaked figure who is skulking with an odd limp around the Korranberg docks. The figure could turn out to be a badly damaged, down-on-its-luck warforged casing waterfront shops for things it could steal. Or perhaps it is two Kech Volaar goblin brothers on stilts, who are on a crazy mission to gain entry to the Library of Korranberg. Or perhaps it's a young girl with darting eyes and a heavy suitcase full of the treasure recently missing from the Museum of Korranberg. In any case, the person(s) behind the cloak is desperate enough to try anything. The heroes have an unpredictable encounter ahead of them, and they could end up helping the person with his/her plans or working to thwart them.

### The Playthings of Fortune

An older human man removes his cloak and sits down at the party's tavern table. His dress, though dusty and sweaty, indicates a more refined background than the others in this dingy dive, which makes more sense when he introduces himself as Professor Burk Hammat of Morgrave University. He explains that he is a member of the Dharuuc-Bal, a group of ten local academics who spend their free time adventuring and thrill-seeking (their name is a goblin phrase meaning "Playthings of Fortune"). Since their adventures are usually of uncertain legality, they would all lose their tenure if the University found out about their escapades -- but now they're in trouble. A mind flayer and its voidmind minions (*Monster Manual III*, page 187) captured three of their number while spelunking

in a nearby cavern, and now Professor Hammat needs *real* adventurers to come to their aid -- as discreetly as possible!

## Where the Dead May Hide

A walking corpse wearing a cloak to hide its appearance is looking for a way to take the train to Karrnath, and it needs the heroes' help to make the journey. This may be an opportunity for a serious story about a restless spirit trying to return home and the "undead discrimination" he faces along the way, or -- perhaps more likely -- a silly, light-hearted adventure about a zombie (or other undead) on the run. To keep the tension high, have numerous close calls, with discovery just around the corner. The ticket-taker wants to stamp the undead rider's card and compare his face with his ID papers. A nearby traveler complains about the smell coming from the party's compartment. A child rolls a ball right between the legs of the zombie and runs to catch it -- only to look up into those dead eyes. . . . There may be one or more other groups on the train trying to locate the departed traveler at the same time: some living family members who claim it owes them money, or some obsessed Vol cultists, or a biographer who just won't give up.

## The King's Guest

The crown of Breland has put up a secret guest in one tower of Brokenblade Castle. The Brelish capital is abuzz, because the only information known about the guest is that the cooks have been asked to prepare quadruple the normal amount of food for the guest, and a local tailor has been sent an *enormous* (12-foot long), black, woolen cloak by the Brelish crown for repairs. Wroat's notorious gossip rag, the *Wroat Daily Gazette*, will pay anyone a hefty premium for the scoop on who this guest is, and the resourceful PCs are contacted straightaway.

## Mini-Hooks

- A worried changeling father asks the heroes to locate his runaway daughter somewhere in Wroat -- and though the daughter can change her appearance at will, she was wearing an embroidered green cloak when last her father saw her.
- A fur-cloaked warrior seeks companions to retrieve his missing brother from a dangerous mountain pass.
- Rumors circulate that a vampire has taken residence in a wizard's laboratory in Aundair, but actually a wizard professor has just perfected her *cloak of the bat*.
- A dark-cloaked dwarf seeks resourceful contestants for a Six Stones match (*Sharn: City of Towers*, page 33). He'll provide the stake and a share of the profits if one of the adventurers can win.
- An elf cloaked in blue silk has been sighted using illegal illusion magic somewhere in town, and she is blamed for the recent robbery of an antique bookshop. The heroes are deputized to help find the suspect.
- As the adventurers discover a ruined tower deep in the jungle, a shifter in a battered brown cloak is seen falling from its highest point to the jungle floor below.
- Researchers from Sharn seek a mysterious warforged ranger wearing a leathery dark-blue cloak, believing him to be knowledgeable about the anatomy of cloakmakers.

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## About the Author

Doug Beyer spent a lot of time getting philosophy degrees until he figured out that he should just move to Seattle and become a web developer for Wizards of the Coast. Now he spends his days working on games and his evenings playing them. Doug uses the time normally allotted for sleeping to lurk on the Wizards.com message

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